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SUBJECT: ZAAB TRIANGLE: EXPANDED PRT OPERATIONS TARGET KEY REGION

Classified By: NINEWA PRT LEADER JASON HYLAND: 1.4 (B) AND (D)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), Southern Branch Office, message, in collaboration with Salah ad Din PRT.

Summary

¶1. (C) The Zaab Triangle, a region bounded by the Tigris and Zaab rivers in southern Ninewa and northern Salah ad Din provinces, is a focal point of counter-insurgency operations.

In collaboration with PRT Salah ad Din, and with superb support from the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, PRT Nineva has expanded its operations in this crucial area, which has been difficult to access in the past. The City Council Chief and Mayor in northern Salah ad Din province's Sharqat District have eagerly engaged with the Provincial Reconstruction Team following January's opening of a Branch Office in neighboring Qayyara, which covers southern Nineva as well as serves as a platform to cover Sharqat and surrounding communities. PRT Nineva ) Southern Branch Office works closely with PRT Salah ad Din to leverage our resources and to provide the best support to local needs in the strategically important northwest corner of Salah ad Din Province. With our support, the Sharqat leaders have in the last month held open town meetings to discuss problems with fuel distribution. They have been aggressive in dealing with the Salah ad Din provincial government to claim their share of the budget for needed infrastructure. They have the attention of the Provincial Governor, and they are willing to learn the processes necessary better to represent their constituents and to manage projects.

Fuel Meeting an Example of Effective Governance

¶2. (C) As an example of its effectiveness as an advocate for its constituents, the Sharqat City Council ) with the advice of the PRT Southern Branch Office - held a town meeting in early February to address the lack of fuel in the district. The meeting with council members, citizens and the local director of fuel distribution, was a rare opportunity for officials to push down to residents detailed data on methods of fuel distribution and rationing as well as recent national infrastructure with the Baiji Oil Refinery that constrain local fuel deliveries. Simultaneously, the residents used the meeting to quantify their needs and identify specific areas of shortage, particularly in kerosene. Fuel delivered would be "sold out" within 24 hours, residents said.

PRT Addressing Local Needs

¶3. (C) Even as the local council grows in effectiveness, the PRT is pitching in collaboratively to improve local service

delivery in several key areas. As with much of the Sharqat district, the Al Sakania village water supply infrastructure is dilapidated from lack of maintenance. Budgets are annual and do not include operations and maintenance costs. PRT Nineva is providing Quick Response Funds to fix transmission infrastructure that will provide long-term, low-cost benefits to local residents. In a separate project, the PRT is helping equip and train Sharqat municipal officials with information technology equipment needed to improve their communications within the GOI system, manage their own projects and provide training and support to local civil society groups. The project is scheduled to transition to self-sufficiency as these improved communications secure additional funds and local buy-in.

COMMENT

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¶4. (C) COMMENT: The Sharqat City Council stands out in the region as an example of open dialogue and effective constituent communication. The council's conduct boosts its credibility and legitimacy in the face of overwhelmingly critical conservative religious elements present in the community. Working in collaboration with the Salah ad Din PRT, and in close coordination with the Regiment and Division, PRT Nineva will continue to engage the Council and Mayor, encouraging them to continue their local engagement and facilitation of information exchange as a tool of effective governance, and supporting them through targeted, sustainable QRF projects.

CROCKER